

Predestination, Foreknowledge and Election

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There are so many theories today concerning foreknowledge, predestination and election. The mind of the normal and average Christian is so mixed up that he really doesn't know what to believe. If we do not get these three doctrines straight, our whole Christian life will be warped, and soul winning will become a lost grace. Let us turn first to the foreknowledge of God.

THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8:29)

Foreknowledge means to have knowledge of things to be. Foreknowledge is an **attribute** of God, while Predestination and Election are **acts** of God. Only God knows the future. And He does know the future. He wouldn't be God if He didn't, but the fact that He knows who is going to be saved, and who isn't going to be saved, does NOT determine who is going to be saved and who is going to be lost. Someone may ask, "If God does know who is and who isn't going to be saved, how, then, can the sinner get out of it?" Foreknowledge, in Scripture, **never** determines what is to be - foreknowledge is only the knowledge of things to be beforehand. It is the same with our scientists, they can tell when there is to be an eclipse of the sun or of the moon: on a certain day at a certain hour, minute and second; but the scientists do not bring about the eclipse. God has foreknowledge, and by this foreknowledge knows the future, but that is where it ends.

Of course God knows everything! He knows the very number of the hairs of our heads. He knows the number of the stars and calleth them by name. God knows everything, including the future. And, not only that, but God knows what would have happened if things had happened that didn't happen. He knows the results of all possibilities. The same is illustrated when David inquired of the Lord concerning his enemy. If he should go to one place, would the enemy be there? God said they would. So David went in another direction. Foreknowledge simply means to possess knowledge of things to be.

THE PREDESTINATION OF GOD

Here is where many of the saints falter in their Christian witnessing. They read something or other in the Word about predestination and then reason that God predestinates some people to be saved, and thus predestinates some people to be lost. That is not the case. To begin with, predestination is never for the lost man, to be saved or to be lost; but rather, predestination is for the saved man. We have only to read our Bibles, and read the context where it is speaking of predestination, to clearly understand that Salvation is, indeed, a personal matter based upon the "whosoever wills."

As stated before, Predestination is for the saved man. God knows who is going to be saved, and thus He has predestinated certain blessings for those who are going to get saved by faith. In other words, God draws a circle, figuratively speaking, and says that whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will get in that circle. So the believer, upon his faith in Jesus Christ, steps into the circle. Then God says, figuratively speaking, "Whosoever is in that circle by faith, I have predestinated that they shall receive these blessings," and here they are:

"TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON."

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29a). This one of the blessings God has predestinated for the believer - that the believer is going to be fashioned, made, transformed, transfigured into the likeness of the image of Jesus Christ. The things you might be suffering at this moment are happening to you (Rom. 8:28) to make you more like Jesus. And at the rapture, whether we be dead or alive at His coming, we are all going to be changed and be wholly like unto Christ.

"UNTO THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BY JESUS CHRIST."

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:5). Again we want to state that predestination is the predetermined blessings for the saved man and has nothing to do with salvation. Now, in the above text, we are told that the Christian is predestined unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. It doesn't say that the sinner was predestinated to become a child of God; no, but rather the saint has been predestinated unto the adoption of children.

To get a better idea of this great truth, it is well to explain the meaning of adoption. In America and England, when we adopt a child, we go by legal means and take a child of another family and get the court to make it our own. But not so with Jewish family, nor with the ancient Roman and Greek family. These adopted their own children. Adoption simply means "to declare as a son," or "son placed." The fourth chapter of Galatians clearly defines the meaning of adoption. It is the time appointed by the father when his boy ceases to be considered a child and becomes a recognized son. According to even present day Jewish custom it is called BAR MITZVAH - declared to be a Son of the Law, Son of Blessing. The boy becomes of age after his thirteenth birthday, on the day selected by the father. So it is with us: we are children of God, but we are waiting our BAR MITZVAH, our adoption, the time

when our Heavenly Father will declare us of age and place us as Sons before the whole universe: "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION, TO WIT, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY" (Rom. 8:23). This is one blessing that God has predestinated for the saved man, for all who are trusting the Lord Jesus Christ - that we all shall be declared to be of age and as His SONS - at the resurrection!

"PREDESTINATED ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE OF HIM."

Here is the third blessing for the child of God - "that which God has predestinated for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ by faith: "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ" (Eph. 1:11, 12). You will notice that it is not salvation the Holy Spirit is speaking about, but that which is for those who are saved. So many fail to read the 12th verse; herein is what God has predestinated - that we should be to the praise of His glory; Nowhere do we find predestination for, or not for, salvation.

ELECTION

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Eph. 1:4) The New Testament words "chosen, choose, and election" are the same. The Old Testament word is simply "chosen." From the above Scripture many have felt that God chooses some to be saved and some to be lost. Again I want to point out that predestination and election (choosing) have nothing to do with the lost, but are for the saved.

From the following Scriptures we learn what the choosing, or election, of God is about: "For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, THAT THE PURPOSE OF GOD ACCORDING TO ELECTION MIGHT STAND, not of works, but of him that calleth); It was said unto her, THE ELDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (Rom. 9:9-13).

At once we point out that election, or choosing, has to do with service; THE ELDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER. It does not say, "The younger shall be saved, and the elder shall be lost." No, but simply, "the elder shall SERVE the younger." Thus choosing, or election, has to do with service. "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" wasn't said of these two men before they were born, but hundreds of years after they died.

God hated the descendants of Esau because of their unbelief, and loved the descendants of Jacob because of their faith.

In the 15th chapter of John's Gospel, the Lord Jesus said that He had chosen

(elected) them disciples. For salvation? No, for service. Even Judas was chosen! For damnation? No, but like Pharaoh, who was a fit vessel unto wrath - after being given many chances to believe, refused, and thus was used for God's purpose.

The prophet Isaiah says that Israel is God's chosen people (Isaiah 41:8). Does this mean that all Jews are saved? No. It simply means that God has chosen Israel for a service. And we know what that service was: to give us the Word of God and to give us the Lord Jesus Christ!

The same prophet, Isaiah, says that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Chosen Servant of God (Isaiah 42:1). Does this mean that God chose the Lord Jesus to be saved? Of course not! For He is the SAVIOUR! But God did choose His Son for a service - and that service was to be the Lamb of God who would die for the sins of the world. And He was the obedient Servant, being obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross!

Now back to the original text, as found in Ephesians 1:4. What has God elected or chosen us for? Not salvation; but He has chosen us even before the foundation of the world (He knew that we would believe on His Son) for service - "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

Thus, we conclude that God does not predestinate or elect men to be saved or lost, but that salvation is on the basis of "**WHOSOEVER WILL!**" - "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And **WHOSOEVER WILL**, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17).

God's Simple Plan